

Submission
Development Application A006196002
409 Beckett Rd Bridgeman Downs

North Brisbane Catchments is firmly opposed to this Development Application in its entirety.

Please also see Appendices highlighting the importance of this bushland/habitat/corridor.

This lot (409 Beckett Rd) forms part of a regionally important and irreplaceable cross-Beckett Rd wildlife corridor, which in turn forms part of the Mountains To Mangroves network.

This is the last such cross-Beckett Rd wildlife corridor in the area.



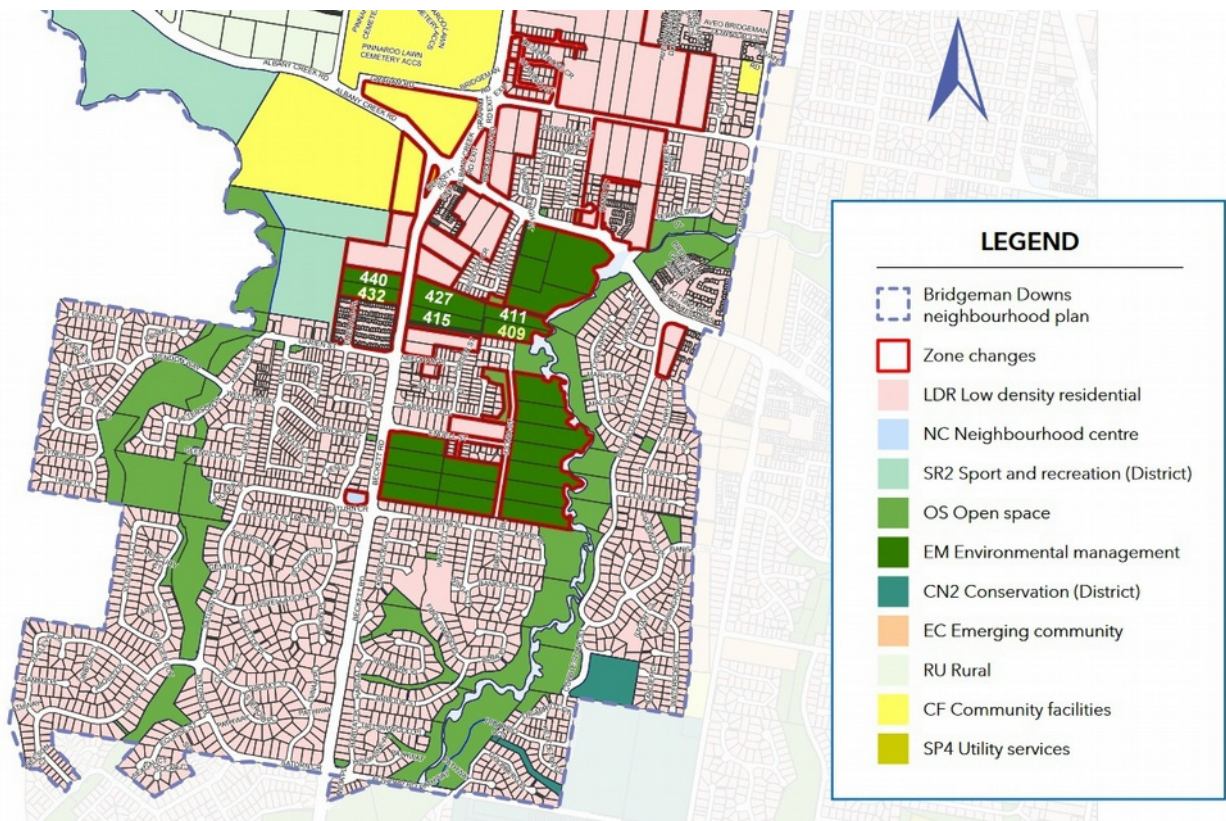
The Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland has highlighted that an effective corridor should be of sufficient width including edge effects (See Appendix B).

Wildlife in this area includes platypuses (See appendix A) which are well established in the creek just to the west of Beckett Rd and this lot, and well known to travel overland in search of new habitat and breeding partners, in this case Cabbage Tree Creek to the east. Birds and bats are also known to favour crossing major roads above bushland.

A Development Application for adjacent 415/427 Beckett Rd was twice rejected in its entirety, and is the subject of an on-going appeal in the Planning & Environment Court.

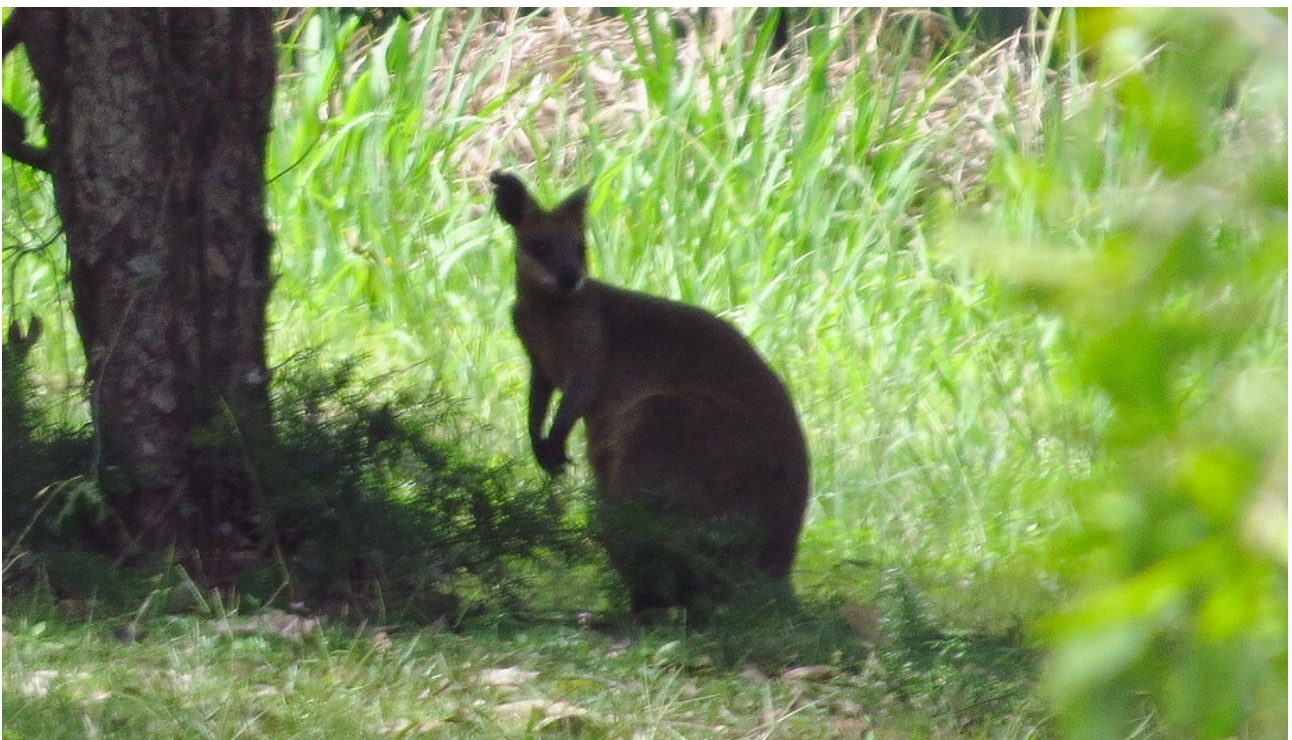
This Development Application does not appear to provide anywhere near adequate provision for wildlife movement between Cabbage Tree Creek and the west.

Due to the inestimable environmental value of this lot, the Bridgeman Downs Neighbourhood Plan has this and five other lots making up the natural wildlife corridor earmarked to be rezoned to Environmental Management. Although this zoning is regrettably not yet in effect, the community sentiment is obvious.



Developers pursue one-off profits and perpetual destruction in their wake. A recent survey also proved that the vast majority of locals want this irreplaceable wildlife corridor preserved.

In December 2022, several trees were illegally felled on this lot.



Wallaby - 409 Beckett Rd - February 2023

On 9th May 2023 a wallaby was struck and killed in front of adjacent 415 Beckett Rd. This wildlife corridor needs preservation and management, not severing by development.

With reference to koalas specifically, please see:

South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy

<https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/wildlife/animals/living-with/koalas/conservation/seq-koala-strategy>

South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy 2020-2025 – Implementation Plan (Qld Department of Environment and Science)

https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0029/271487/koala-strategy-implementation-plan.pdf

Genetic variation and structuring in the threatened koala populations of Southeast Queensland (Australian Parliament House document)

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKFwip-djw4r7-AhVvaGwGHdABAtwQFnoECAsQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.aph.gov.au%2FDocumentStore.ashx%3Fid%3D347a3be-c6f1-4656-b5cc-9144063cd949&usq=AOvVaw2dKnKEDpe5EJdcfskwAMZK>

Bats and microbats are also in dire trouble and desperately need corridors such as this preserved. Please see a statement supplied by Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld (Appendix C). The same applies to butterflies and other invertebrates which are great indicators of environmental health.

The Beckett Rd Wildlife Corridor is the closest point between the verified platypus population in the creek (Albany Creek proper) to the west of the Darien St playing fields and Cabbage Tree Creek to the east. Please see Appendix A. Dawn Rd Reserve and Albany Creek (proper) form the wildlife gateway beyond there including Clear Mountain and Moreton Bay.

We have contacted Moreton Bay Regional Council (MBRC) on the matter of the Beckett Rd Wildlife Corridor, as it affects MBRC as well.

In a separate document referred to in a letter from MBRC ("PINE RIVERS RURAL DISTRICT ECOLOGICAL CORRIDORS") the Albany Creek Corridor is noted as follows: *"The Albany Creek Corridor aligns with Albany Creek, which is a tributary of the South Pine River. This corridor supports vegetation of State and Regional Significance that forms a riparian community along much of the extent of the watercourse"*. This letter from MBRC is available on request. The Albany Creek Corridor is less than a kilometre to the west of this lot.

The 2021 statement provided by Wildlife Qld (Appendix B) still holds very true. In fact, since then further development and subsequent habitat and corridor loss (including 432 Beckett Rd DA recently approved by BCC) has made the Beckett Rd Wildlife Corridor even more vital to be preserved.

The most recent DA submitted over 415-427 Beckett Rd shows a still severely lacking 25m wide "corridor" which furthermore is slated to supposedly be protected by a covenant, rather than being rezoned to Open Space or Environmental Management and given to the people of Brisbane.

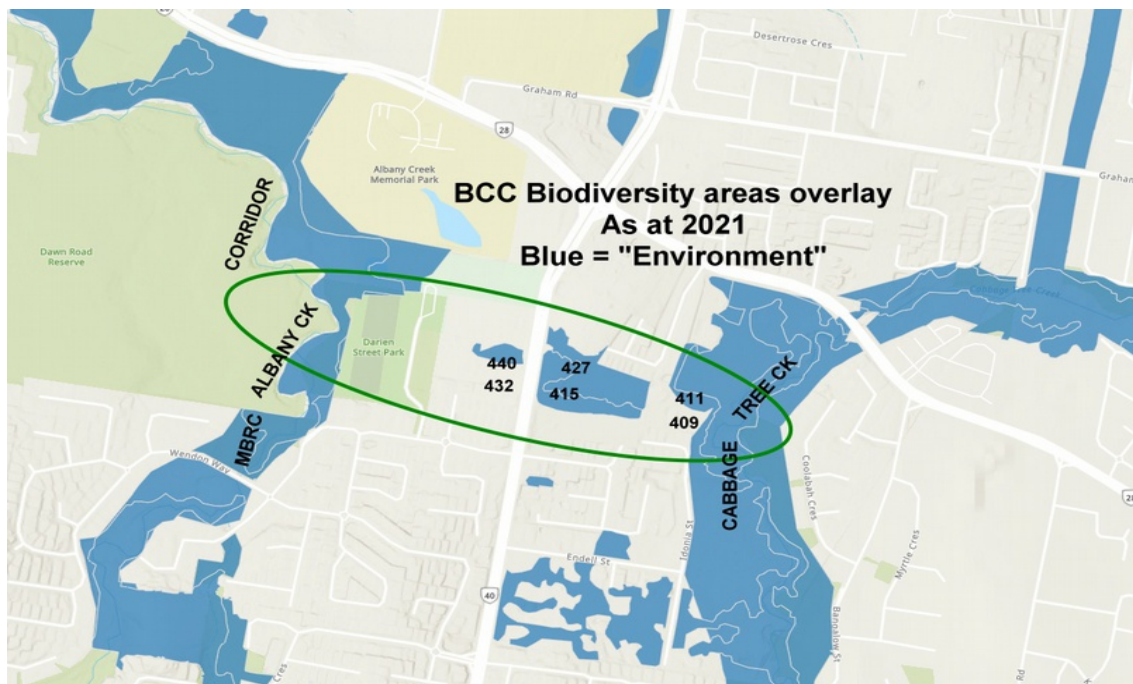
A 2007 joint publication "PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR KOALA CONSERVATION AND RECOVERY - A guide to best planning practice" suggests a minimum corridor width of 50M. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKFwjn75PKhsb-AhXESmwGHV8OAIQQFnoECDQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fespace.library.uq.edu.au%2Fview%2FUQ%3A124088%2Fmcalpine_et_al_2007.pdf&usq=AOvVaw2wCG7eFzP4eXkbq3a42sl7

A 2021 NSW Govt report suggests a minimum width of about 400M.

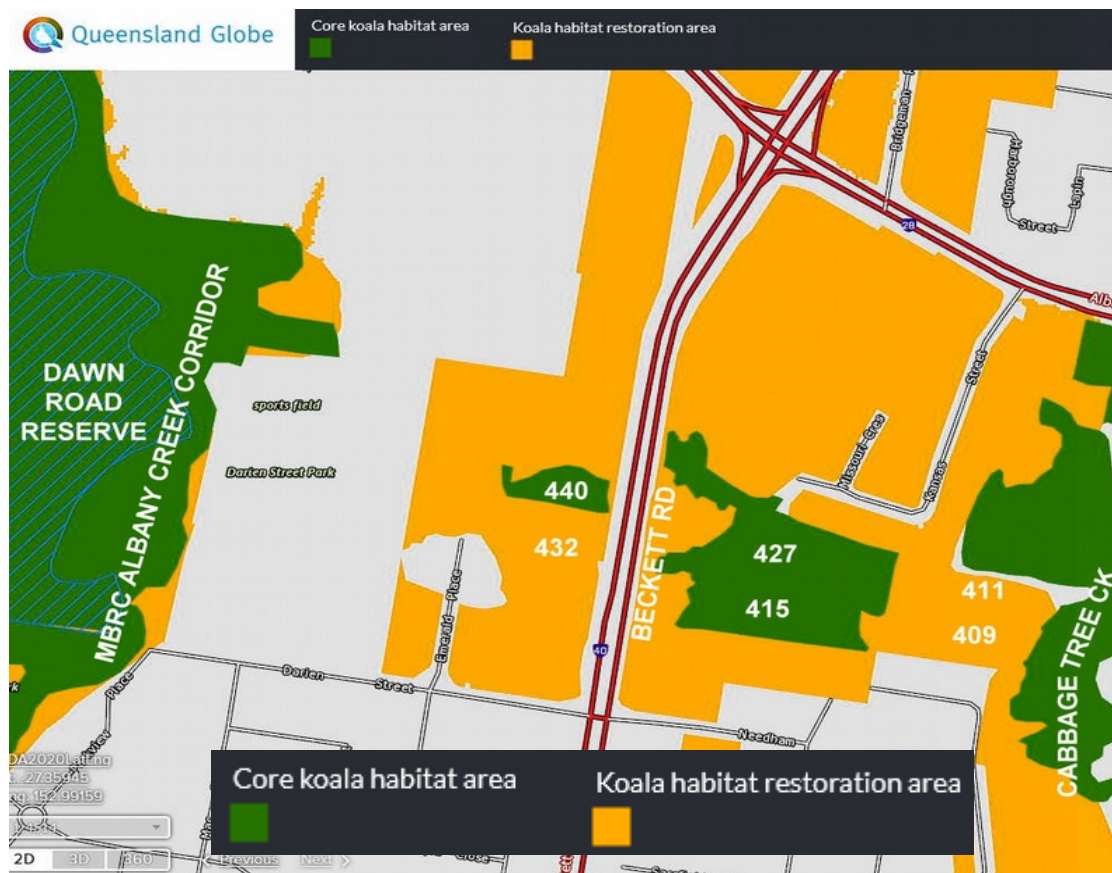
<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Reports/Policy-and-legislation/strategic-conservation-plan/Cumberland-Plain-Conservation-Plan-functional-koala-corridors-report-2021.pdf>

Mapping

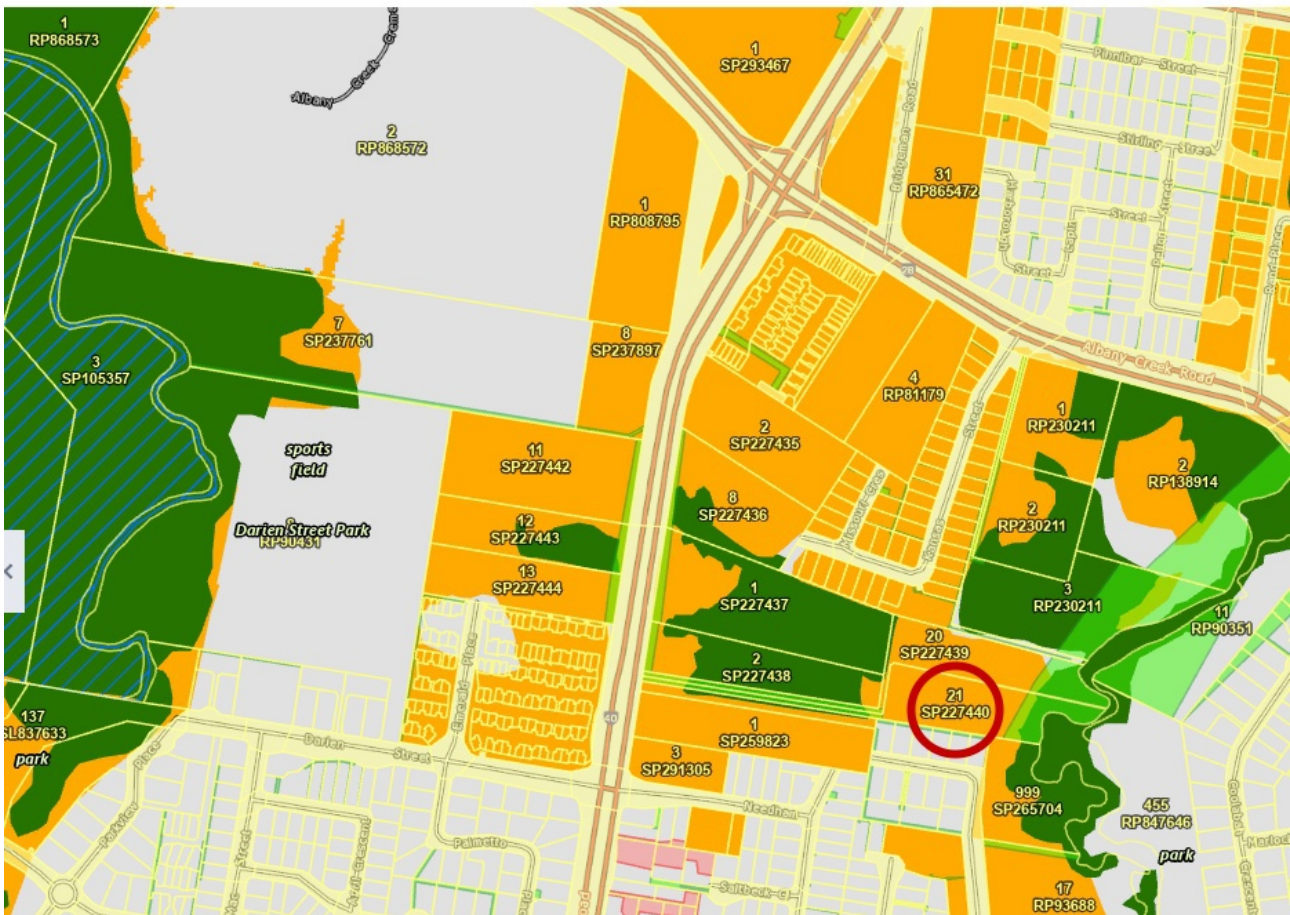
The current BCC Biodiversity Areas Overlay illustrates very clearly the natural wildlife corridor between the MBRC Albany Ck Corridor and Cabbage Tree Ck.



The current Qld Government Koala Mapping also makes it very clear. The Vice President of Moreton Bay Koala Rescue, confirms that if anything, the Qld Government Koala Mapping in this area is too conservative.



Links between habitat are just as important as the habitat itself. This lot is exactly that.



Wildlife Sightings

Wildlife is constantly observed on this lot. This wildlife includes significant species such as wallabies. The Ecology Report for this DA notes recent evidence of koala activity. Part of this lot is Core Koala Habitat, and the rest of the lot forms a link with Core Koala Habitat on lots immediately to the west (415/427 Beckett Rd). The Ecology Report notes scats that appear to be koala scats.

Section 2.2.3 of the Ecology Report notes approximately six hours of fauna survey effort. By comparison, residents of neighbouring properties and people out walking have spent substantially more time, thousands of hours, at all times of the year, observing the local wildlife. They report seeing wallabies on the subject lot daily.

Section 2.2.4 Survey Limitations refers to the survey methodology as a snapshot.

In August 2022, within 100 metres of this lot, there was a sighting by two people of what they were certain was a platypus in Cabbage Tree Creek. BCC have recently engaged with Wildlife Qld regarding the local platypus population.

Illegal Clearing

In December 2022 several trees were felled illegally on this lot. Was this taken into account when doing the Ecological Survey after that?

Nesting Hollows

Nesting hollows take at least 50 years to form. That can only happen in situ. Section 2.2.2 of the Ecological Report notes "Presence of hollow-bearing trees".

Offset Planting

This is significant wildlife corridor. Wildlife corridor can not be offset by new plantings in other locations.

40% Natural Habitat Cover

BCC has a target of 40% natural habitat cover for Brisbane. The destruction of the mature and advanced trees on this lot does not align with the aims and intent of this BCC strategy.

Ecological Report Relevance

This DA flies in the face of it's own Ecological Report.

Conclusion

The loss or degradation of this important wildlife corridor to any extent would have a massive impact not just on the wildlife, but to future generations of residents. Once it's gone it's gone forever, with the developers long-gone with their one-off profits Many of the locals won't easily forget as the natural environment is the reason they've always lived in Bridgeman Downs.

In assessing this development application Brisbane City Council has here an opportunity to be a leader in world-class urban wildlife management.

Anecdotally, local sentiment is growing against any development of this and any other of the six blocks making up this wildlife corridor. There is already local disbelief of the recent approval of the DA over 432 Beckett Rd. Approval of this DA over 409 Beckett Rd would only add to that growing strong local sentiment.

The Committee
North Brisbane Catchments

Appendix A - Advice from Tamielle Brunt, Platypus Watch, The Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, 3/April/2023 is as follows.



Q1. At 950M, can you confirm it's feasible that platypuses could find their way cross-country, especially in a big rain event, between Albany Ck in the west to Cabbage Tree Creek in the east via an underpass under Beckett Rd?

A: Yes, it would be possible for platypuses to travel that distance especially if helped with flooding across the landscape and connecting the waterways. They have also been documented to use stormwater tunnels/drains and I would think they would have no problem using a safety underpass.

Q2. Can you confirm it's more likely that platypuses would use an underpass rather than an overpass?

A: I would certainly think so, again due to records of stormwater pipeline usage. The cover overhead from an underpass may also allow them protection while traversing and not vulnerable to being out in the open for predators and the possibility of being run over crossing roads.

Q3. Can you confirm that the most direct route, even if it involves the open playing fields, would be preferred by overland migrating platypuses?

A: Yes, the drainage line looks to be the most direct route. It looks to have more vegetation cover and possible water connection which is the better option for the chance of migration between waterways.

Appendix B - Statement from Wildlife Qld



www.wildlife.org.au

To WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I have been directed by State Council of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (Wildlife Queensland) to call on you to take action.

Wildlife Queensland is one of the longest established and most respected wildlife-focused conservation groups in Queensland. With over 6500 supporters, Wildlife Queensland is a strong voice for our wildlife and its habitat. Wildlife Queensland is apolitical. Our aims reflect a strong interest in conserving our biodiversity, our natural landscapes and seascapes and protection of our environment and advocating for sound land use planning. Wildlife Queensland is not opposed to ecological sustainable development but there needs to be a balance among the needs of the environment, sustainable development and use and society's needs.

Acknowledging that the battle to stop the further loss of green space in Bridgeman Downs is before the Courts there is still time for action to be taken to protect this critical habitat for the vulnerable Koala the conservation status of which is under review with certain organisations advocating for critically endangered status. Naturally there are a range of other species that call the area home. The significant role and essential status of the habitat under threat plays in linking Cabbage Tree Creek and Albany Creek bushland corridors cannot be overstressed. The role is even more critical when the Mountains to Mangroves corridor comes into play.

[Narrow] Wildlife corridors are not the answer in this situation. Wildlife corridor designs have been studied extensively. Wildlife corridors are relatively natural bushland between two bushland blocks enabling demographic interaction and gene flows to occur. For a corridor to be effective it has to be wide enough to avoid edge effects destroying its purpose and also of sufficient size to include habitat patches for the wildlife using the corridor. Clearing vegetation at Beckett Road would put an end to the establishment of any effective corridors.

There comes a time when the value and benefits of wildlife, its habitat and the natural environment to the broader community must be taken into consideration and not set aside in the name of development under the guise of progress. Invariably development proposed could be located on a site already developed nearby at a cost where as if this bushland is destroyed it is lost forever and contributes to the ever increasing threats to our wildlife in natural settings.

Wildlife Queensland urges you to take immediate and forceful action now to stop further loss of green space in the Bridgeman Downs area and not be a party to the local extinction of the iconic koala.

Des Boyland, Secretary

24th September 2021

Appendix C - Statement from Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld

This statement from the President of Bat Conservation & Rescue and applies specifically to the Beckett Road Wildlife Corridor.

"As president of Bat Conservation & Rescue Qld Inc. I wish to add my strongest objection to the development proposals. Currently volunteer wildlife organisations are overwhelmed with calls, rescue, rehabilitation, care and financial demands. This is resulting in many volunteers leaving wildlife volunteering due to burn out and compassion fatigue. Unfortunately many healthy animals are having to be euthanased due to lack of carers. The RSPCA and other like organisations do not do wildlife caring. Many of the so called 'fauna spotters' on the developments have insufficient knowledge or training resulting in many animals being dumped or left injured on site. They also rely on volunteer groups to take the animals.

With regards to bats, flying foxes use these areas as flight corridors and for feeding. Microbats are a colonial species (cannot be relocated) and live in the areas remaining. Each time one of the blocks is cleared, my organisation gets an increase call for microbats in nearby residential properties as the ones that aren't killed during the process (they are nocturnal so are usually in their tree hollow roosts) are displaced from their homes. My organisation is operating at maximum for flying foxes and microbats and we are losing rescuers and carers due to burn out. The remaining corridors of bushland need to be protected."

Full details are available on request.